

# Department of Human Services

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## Articles in Today's Clips Friday, January 5, 2007

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

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The Detroit News

Friday, January 05, 2007

Wayne Briefs

## **Brownstown Twp.: Trial set in drowning**

A 28-year-old woman's trial for involuntary manslaughter starts Wednesday in the June 26, 2006, drowning of her 11-month-old infant. Lisa Garner called police from her Charles Street home to report her baby died after crawling into the family pool. Garner also faces second-degree child abuse charges, a four-year felony. Wayne County Circuit Judge Cynthia Gray Hathaway will preside over the trial.

The Port Huron Times Herald

January 5, 2007

**The phones are ringing. I'd better see what's on your minds today.**

**Talk to me:**

M.D. from St. Clair: "This message is to Katie from Kimball Township regarding her complaint about a mother buying urine to pass a drug test in order to get her children back. I am a foster parent with a child placed in my home because the birth mother has a drug problem. I am begging you to contact someone at the Family Independence Agency - (810) 966-2000 - to identify that person. Even contact me - I would be happy to pass on the information to our caseworker. *TalkBack* will have my contact information. For the welfare of these children, I pray that you come forward. I would hate for these children to be placed into a home that could pose great danger to them."

Detroit Free Press Macomb County briefs  
*January 5, 2007*

## **CLINTON TOWNSHIP: Man faces online child sex charges**

A 32-year-old Rochester Hills man was arraigned Wednesday in 41B District Court on charges he tried to arrange sex with someone he thought was a 14-year-old boy, according to the Macomb County Sheriff's Office.

Gregory M. Gallup was charged with child sexually abusive activity, using a computer in the commission of a crime and accosting a child for immoral purposes. Bond was set at \$50,000.

Officers said Gallup initiated an online chat with a Macomb Area Computer Enforcement team officer who was posing as a teenage boy. He was arrested when he arrived at an undisclosed meeting place in the county for the purpose of having sex, the Sheriff's Office said Thursday.

# ILE CAMERA

## January is Stalking Awareness Month

Gov. Jennifer Granholm has proclaimed January as Stalking Awareness Month in the state.

Michigan was among the first states in the nation to observe Stalking Awareness Month.

"It is important for stalking survivors to know they are not alone and that there is help," said Debra Cain, executive director of the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board.

"Stalking Awareness Month affords us the opportunity to share this critical information with survivors in Michigan."

Stalking can create a real and frightening threat to victims and their loved ones.

Stalkers often are unpredictable and dangerous.

In fact, an estimated 76 percent of female homicide victims and 85 percent of attempted female homicide victims have been stalked in the year prior to the crime.

Michigan law defines stalking as "a willful course of conduct involving repeated or continuing harassment of another individual that would cause a reasonable person to feel terrorized, frightened, intimidated, threatened, harassed or molested, and that actually causes the victim to feel terrorized, frightened, intimidated, threatened, harassed or molested."

"Stalking is a serious crime that has the potential to escalate into a very dangerous situation," said Col. Peter Munoz, director of the Michigan State Police.

"If you believe you may be a victim of stalking, I encourage you to contact your nearest law enforcement agency."

Stalking became a crime in Michigan in 1993.

The Michigan State Police report there were approximately 27,000 reported incidents of intimidation/stalking in Michigan during 2005.

About 1.5 million people are victims of stalking in the United States every year. One in 12 women and one in 45 men will be stalked in their lifetimes. Seventy-seven percent of women and 64 percent of men know their stalkers.

"Along with reporting the incidents to law enforcement, victims also can contact their local domestic or sexual violence program for advocacy, counseling and, if necessary, shelter services," said Marianne Udow, Department of Human Services director.

The Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board funds agencies that provide those services statewide.

Members of the legislatively enacted board are appointed by the governor and are charged with leading statewide efforts to eliminate domestic violence.

The board is administratively housed within the Michigan Department of Human Services.

Individuals who are being stalked or abused can find help by calling the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE or 1-800-787-3224 TTY.

For more information about the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board, including the Domestic Violence Resource Directory, visit its Web site at [www.michigan.gov/domesticviolence](http://www.michigan.gov/domesticviolence).



## Muskegon Chronicle

### County's top priority: New jail, youth home

Friday, January 05, 2007

By Steve Gunn

#### CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

If Muskegon County Commissioner James Derezinski has his way, county residents will be voting on a "public safety" millage this year, or perhaps early next year.

Derezinski, who was re-elected chairman of the county board Thursday, said approval of the millage proposal, which would pay for a new county jail and juvenile detention center, is his top goal for the new year.

He said he would like to have a millage proposal on the countywide ballot in November, but others have advised him that would be too soon. Whatever the case, Derezinski said he remains determined to get it on the ballot as soon as possible.

Derezinski, with the support of his fellow commissioners, says the current jail is dilapidated and constantly overcrowded, resulting in the early release of many inmates every month. Commissioners also say the juvenile facility in Whitehall Township is too old, too small and too far away from the county courts.

Commissioners have indicated their desire to build a new jail and juvenile facility close to each other in the downtown Muskegon area, near the Michael E. Kobza Hall of Justice.

"That's my goal," said Derezinski, when asked following Thursday's meeting if a millage proposal for a new jail might be on the ballot this year. "It's a pretty aggressive goal, to be honest with you, but it's my goal. I've been throwing out November (as a possibility), but I keep hearing that's not possible, so we'll see. I'm pushing it."

The swearing in of the new county board and the election of board leadership were the main items on Thursday's agenda.

Before the meeting, nine of the 11 county commissioners were sworn in by Muskegon County Circuit Judge John C. Ruck. That included new Commissioner Lewis Collins, who replaces former Commissioner Nancy Waters as the representative for District 6.

Commissioners Louis McMurray and Steve Wisniewski were absent and will be sworn in later.

At the board meeting, commissioners re-elected Derezinski as chairman by a 9-0 vote. The tally was an affirmation of the bipartisan attitude he has tried to encourage among commissioners since he became chairman a year ago.

Derezinski and his fellow Democrats have a 7-4 edge on the county board, but have forged a good working relationship with the minority Republicans.

Further evidence of that was the re-election of Commissioner John Snider as vice chairman, also by a 9-0 vote. Snider is a Republican, but became vice chairman last year on the recommendation of Derezinski, who says he believes personal qualifications are more important than party labels.

With the leadership in place, Derezinski said he expects to continue the progress the board made in the past year.

Besides the jail effort, major goals this year will be: determining the future of the financially challenged

Brookhaven Medical Care Facility; developing alternate programs for minor offenders, so the jail is not constantly overcrowded; and getting the county's new "land bank" -- a means of managing tax-foreclosed and blighted property -- off the ground, according to Derezinski.

"I thought it went fabulous (in 2006)," Derezinski said. "It was a team effort. We made a lot more progress than we would have with a more partisan approach.

"This county is blessed with the talent we have on this board, all the diverse talent. That's going to make us number one."

Commissioners overwhelmingly approved Derezinski's choices for committee chairmen and vice chairmen. All but one of the board's committees are "committees of the whole," meaning every commissioner is a member.

In the one major change in chair assignments, Derezinski tabbed Snider as the new chairman of the courts/public safety committee, replacing Waters.

Commissioner Don Aley was reappointed chairman of the ways and means committee, Commissioner Bill Gill returns as chairman of the transportation committee, Commissioner Chuck Buzzell was retained as chairman of the human resources committee and Commissioner Bob Scolnik will remain chairman of the community development/strategic planning committee.

The one committee that doesn't include every commissioner is the Muskegon County Board of Public Works.

Appointed to that committee were McMurray, Marve Engle, Snider, Derezinski, Buzzell, Collins, Aley and Wisniewski. Muskegon County Drain Commissioner Martin Hulka is automatically a member of the board.

Commissioners not serving on the public works board are Gill and Commissioner Roger Wade. The public works board will choose its own chair and vice chair at its organizational meeting.

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January 5, 2007

## Metro area Muslims give homeless a hearty donation

As part of Eid al-Adha, 14,000-pound gift of mostly lamb to provide food for local shelters.

**Gregg Krupa / The Detroit News**

**BLOOMFIELD HILLS** -- Over the next several days, the hungry in Metro Detroit will be eating a meat not often available at homeless shelters and soup kitchens -- ample servings of lamb.

The donation of 14,000 pounds of mostly lamb comes from Muslims throughout Metro Detroit as part of the celebration of one of two major feasts on the Islamic calendar, the Festival of Sacrifice, or Eid al-Adha.

The collection of meat, after the ceremony of sacrificing live animals, was organized by various mosques in Metro Detroit and by the Muslim Shura Council of Michigan, a coalition of mosques.

"It's a nice treat," said John Kastler of the Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan.

"It comes at a good time, too. After the holiday season, there is almost a natural tendency to forget about hunger, and this makes a fine gift for our community and we really welcome it."

Eid al-Adha began last weekend and ends this week, along with the culmination of the Hajj and the return of the pilgrims from the holy cities in Saudi Arabia.

The festival commemorates the story in the Quran of God, or Allah, sparing Ishmael, the son of Ibrahim, after God commanded Ibrahim to sacrifice his first-born.

The story is observed by Christians and Jews in their traditions as that of Abraham and Isaac.

An animal, usually a sheep, but sometimes a cow or a goat, is sacrificed by a local butcher, and the meat is eaten with family, shared with friends and distributed to the poor.

The act is symbolic of the willingness of the faithful to give up material goods in order to follow God's commands.

"This is an old ritual," said Mouheib Ayas, a doctor who attends the Muslim Unity Center of Bloomfield Hills. "But in the Detroit area, we never had an organized meat drive. We wanted to do it to increase the awareness of people that there are a lot of people in this country, this town, who need it."

"The majority of Islamic centers in Detroit have contributed," Ayas said. "We have people from Ann Arbor, Bloomfield Hills, Canton and Flint, Lakeshore. It is a community effort."

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Wednesday, January 5, 2007

## Food, shelter grant county's largest

ALMA -- The Federal Emergency Management Agency has awarded Gratiot County a \$35,098 emergency food and shelter grant.

The amount, which the agency bases on the local unemployment rate and community need, is the largest the county has ever received, said Gratiot County United Way Director Sharon Fenton, whose agency serves as the fiscal agent for distributing the money.

A board comprised of representatives from the Salvation Army, American Red Cross, Office of Human Services, Child Advocacy, **Department of Human Services**, Chamber of Commerce, county government and area churches will assist in determining how funds are used.

Detroit Free Press

Oakland County briefs

*January 5, 2007*

**BLOOMFIELD HILLS: Care provider pleads guilty to Medicare fraud**

A Bloomfield Hills man entered a guilty plea to federal Medicare fraud charges Thursday in U.S. District Court in Detroit.

Iftakhar Udin Khan, 59, admitted to submitting nearly \$800,000 in fraudulent Medicare expenses for services allegedly rendered at Michigan Rehabilitation and Pain Management. Khan was president of the firm.

U.S. Attorney Stephen Murphy said Khan submitted reimbursement reports for a grand total of \$799,462.

Khan is set to be sentenced May 3. He faces a maximum 30 months in prison.

## \$26.6M In Bills Killed By Veto

MIRS, Thursday, January 4, 2007

Five Republican-pushed bills that came with a combined annual price tag of at least \$26.6 million were vetoed by Gov. Jennifer **GRANHOLM**, who said this type of money can't be spent until the state is on "stable fiscal footing."

Legislation giving tax credits to windmill operators, encouraging farmers to resist selling off their land for development, allowing locals to give the Mason's property tax breaks, making the state pick up the health costs of now-adopted children and creating \$100-a-piece income tax deductions for an umbilical cord blood deposit were all knocked down as casualties of a "massive fiscal hole."

The reason, the Governor said, is the state budget's volatile situation, created by the state's ongoing economic restructuring, the sharp drop in sales tax revenues and the accelerated elimination of the Single Business Tax (SBT) without a replacement. Estimates have pinned the state's budget hole for the current Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 at roughly \$500 million. For FY 2008, it's another \$700 million.

"I will not sign bills such as these, though they may be very worthy, that impose significant new costs," Granholm wrote.

Matt **RESCH**, press secretary for House Minority Leader Craig **DeROCHE** (R-Nov), noted that it's interesting that "a priority for the state is something she proposes and something that spends too much money is something somebody else proposes."

"We hope the fiscal restraint that she has adopted as a New Year's Resolution continues when she puts her budget together in a couple months," Resch said.

The bills Granholm vetoed today include:

- **HB 4257**, sponsored by Rep. Howard **WALKER** (R-Traverse City), that would have created a tax credit for farmers that would have given them a financial incentive to keep their property zoned agriculture and their property taxes low. The idea is this "Farmland Preservation" bill would have stopped the spread of urban sprawl.

Michigan farmers would have saved on average about two-thirds on their property tax bill under the legislation. The Senate Fiscal Agency pinned the cost of the proposal at \$1.1 to \$1.8 million in the first year and as much as \$8.9 million by the time the enrollment into the program closed in 2013.

- **HB 4647**, sponsored by Rep. John **MOOLENAAR** (R-Midland), would have created a one-year SBT credit for businesses that own small wind turbines. The total cost of the SBT credits was capped at \$3 million and no one business could exceed more than \$750,000 in credit.

"While **HB 4647** would have been a modest step, at best, towards growing a renewable energy economy in Michigan, the bill highlights the importance of a top priority issue in 2007 - Michigan's energy future," said Environment Michigan Advocate Kim **PARGOFF**. "The bill serves as an important precedent signaling that the Legislature understands state action is necessary for Michigan to become a leader in renewables."

- **HB 5761**, sponsored by Rep. Rick **JONES** (R-Grand Ledge), would have allowed locals to give the Mason's and similar non-profit corporations a property tax exemption at the estimated cost of \$500,000 statewide.

- **HB 6661**, sponsored by Rep. Scott **HUMMEL** (R-DeWitt), would have required the Department of Human Services (DHS) to give adoption assistance and medical assistance to those who adopt special needs children.

While DHS would have been asked to cover an estimated \$20 million in medical costs, Republicans argued that the state stood to lose as much as \$45 million in federal funds if it didn't address the problem of special needs children not getting the care they needed because of financial restraints.

Michigan Report

January 4, 2007

## **MOST STATE REGIONS SEE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE INCREASE**

Seasonally unadjusted unemployment rates went up in November in a majority of Michigan's labor markets and in the state, according to data released from the Department of Labor and Economic Growth.

Rates increased in 16 of the 17 labor market areas while unemployment levels decreased seasonally.

The state's overall seasonally unadjusted unemployment rate increased .4 percent from October, going from 6.1 percent to 6.5 percent. It also increased .3 percent from November of last year.

"The state's labor markets reported typical changes in November," said Rick Waclawek, director of the Bureau of Labor Market Information & Strategic Initiatives in a press release.

The Monroe County area was the only major labor market to see its unemployment rate go down from October, going to 5.9 percent from 6.3 percent.

The Northeast Lower Michigan area had the highest unemployment rate in November at 8.6 percent, up 1.9 percentage points. That was the highest increase in the state.

Rates increased .1 percentage point in the Detroit Warren and Livonia area from October, to 6.8 percent.

From November of last year, unemployment increased in 14 of the major labor markets.

It decreased in the Lansing and East Lansing area, Detroit, Livonia and Warren areas and in the Saginaw and Saginaw Township North areas by about one percent.

The Ann Arbor area had the lowest unemployment in November, at 4.2 percent, up .1 percent from October.

Employment in the manufacturing and retail trades was down in most areas and jobs in professional and business services and health care increased in some areas.

Washtenaw County had the lowest unemployment rate among the counties at 4.2 percent, while Mackinac County had the highest at 13 percent.

## **Labor: Fix Unemployment Comp**

MIRS, Thursday, January 4, 2007

The lobbyist for the state's largest union has a new year's wish: Increase and extend the jobless benefits in Michigan. Ken **FLETCHER** from the Michigan AFL-CIO said that this is at the top of the labor agenda for the new legislative session.

Fletcher said the last time the benefits were increased was in 2002 and since then the rate of inflation has outstripped the average weekly benefit of \$362 (See "**\$362 Goes To Engler**," 4/11/02).

"Workers are falling further behind," he reported.

He did not have a figure on how many of the jobless have exhausted their 26 weeks on the unemployment roles, but he said the number will only increase if lawmakers don't act to revamp the benefit package.

With a new Democratic Party-controlled House, Fletcher may get his wish, but the story in the GOP-run Senate likely will be different. Business has opposed any benefit increases or the indexing of benefits to inflation, saying it can't afford the increased cost which in the long run could produce even more jobless workers in the state.

Fletcher said the issue is "a matter of fairness."

*(Contributed by Senior Capital Correspondent Tim **SKUBICK**.)*

# ILE CAMERA

## State offices exceed budget by \$70 million

### Legislature must demand accountability

How do you make \$70 million disappear and never notice until it's too late? Give it to the state government under Gov. Jennifer Granholm.

Three state departments — Human Services, the Department of Corrections and the Michigan State Police — spent a combined \$70 million more than they were budgeted to spend in the state's last fiscal year.

The overspending is the largest since 1991, according to the non-partisan Senate Fiscal Agency.

Granholm's budget director did not notify the Legislature of the overspending until it was about to adjourn for the year. Granholm's bureaucracy was forced to ask the Legislature for a supplemental appropriation to pay the bills racked up by administrators who apparently either don't know how to budget, or don't care what their budgets dictate.

Since state revenues are down, Lansing has even less money to throw at the overspending. Officials are preparing for the potential of cuts in services in the fiscal year that just began in October.

For the last four years, and particularly during her re-election campaign, Granholm made much of her allegation that she inherited a state budget that was in shambles and in the red from her predecessor. She pounded home incessantly her claim that Gov. John Engler cut programs mercilessly but still drove the state into a deficit of epic proportions. She was handcuffed, she said, by having to clean up Engler's mess during the first four years of her watch.

With that much red ink and cutting that Granholm purportedly addressed, one would think she would have implemented plenty of stops and checks to prevent overspending. One would have to guess again, given the fact that her administrators in the three departments blew past their budgets by \$70 million of the taxpayers' money.

The administrators of these departments work for the people of Michigan, but they answer to Granholm, the state's CEO. How will the governor handle the failure of these administrators to appropriately handle the shareholders' investment? If history is any judge, they won't face punishment of any concern.

The administrators of the Child Protective Services faced no action in the tragic murder of Ricky Holland. No state employee higher than street services level was reprimanded or fired in the Patrick Selepek case, which resulted in the murders of three people.

In any publicly held organization, the CEO would axe the department directors who fouled up, at least for the sake of appearances and to restore confidence among the shareholders.

The Legislature should demand regular reports on the budget status of all departments on a regular basis throughout the year, perhaps quarterly. When departments begin to approach their budget limits, directors must be ordered to find ways to live within their budgets, not come begging for more when it's too late.

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The Grand Rapids Press

Wednesday, January 03, 2007

GREENVILLE/BELDING: If your New Year's resolution to is get more involved in the community, Montcalm County's Department of Human Services may have an opportunity. The agency, headquartered at 609 N. State St. in Stanton, provides food and cash to indigent families and protective services to both children and adults. Currently, there is a need for volunteers with clerical experience to fill office support positions. To help, call (989) 831-8400.



New Charlevoix County board names Roloff chair

By Fred Gray News-Review staff writer

CHARLEVOIX — The new Charlevoix County Board of Commissioners on Wednesday named 11-year county commissioner Shirley Roloff as chair and newcomer Shirlene Tripp as vice chair.

The six-member board, with four of its members newly elected, held its organizational session, setting the time and dates of its twice-monthly meetings and agreeing to Roloff's appointment of committee members and liaisons.

The board agreed to meet the second Wednesday of the month at 9:30 a.m., a change from 3 p.m. of last year, and the fourth Wednesday at 7 p.m., unchanged.

In addition to Roloff (District 6) and Tripp (District 1), the new board comprises Chris Christensen (District 2); Ron Reinhardt (District 3); Joel Evans (District 4), and Robert Drebenstedt (District 5).

Reinhardt and Roloff are the only returning commissioners. The others were elected in last August's Republican primary to replace incumbents Connie Saltonstall, Randy Frykberg, Vic Patrick and Denny Jason.

All six members were sworn to office before Wednesday's meeting.

Major appointments were to the personnel/internal government committee, with Roloff as chair and Evans and Christensen as members, and public safety/judicial/building and grounds, with Reinhardt as chair and Tripp and Drebenstedt as members.

Roloff, Reinhardt and Evans will serve on the audit committee, with the entire board serving on the budget committee.

Clerk Jane Brannon remains the county's fiscal officer.

Edward Holm was appointed as the county's veterans affairs director.

The board agreed to continue to publish a synopsis of the board minutes in five area newspapers, including the Petoskey News-Review.

The board asked the building and grounds committee to look into Bay Township resident Bob Taylor's request that plowed snow not be piled in handicap parking places at the county and the Council on Aging buildings.

County prosecutor and civil counsel John Jarema reported on the bidding process for cleaning the county jail of cellulose and nylon fibers. Roloff said her first priority for the new year will be to find out where the mysterious dirt and other particles are coming from.

Double duty ...

Appointments of liaisons, including Charlevoix County commissioners and others, to county boards, commissions, associations and committees and other organizations:

Road Commission — Shirley Roloff (Ronald Reinhardt, alternate)

Department of Human Services — Joel Evans

County Townships Association — Chris Christensen

Veterans Affairs — Reinhardt (Robert Drebenstedt, alternate)

Commission on Aging — Drebenstedt

Humane Society Board — Reinhardt

Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians — Evans

Planning Commission — Shirlene Tripp (Drebenstedt, alternate)

District Health — Evans and Drebenstedt

Growth Alliance — Christensen

Area Agency on Aging — Drebenstedt

Council of Governments — Christensen (Drebenstedt, alternate)

North Counties/MAC — Reinhardt (Tripp, alternate)

Substance Abuse — Christensen

Regional Community Corrections — Tripp

Mental Health — Drebenstedt

Northwest Human Services — Roloff

U.S. 131 Area Development — Drebenstedt

Sanitary Code Board of Appeals — Evans, Reinhardt, Tripp

Construction Code Board of Appeals — Howard Haselschwardt, Herb Cummings, Edward Reeves, Sylvester Czerkies (alternates, Jack Stebe and Bryan Lindfors)

Renovation — Reinhardt, Christensen, Roloff

Stormwater Appeals Board — Evans, Roloff, drain commissioner, Thomas Irwin, Jim Malowitz, Jim Vanek, Steve Voice, Tim Matchett

GIS Advisory Committee — Christensen

9-1-1 Central Dispatch — Roloff (Reinhardt, alternate)

Recycling Committee — Roloff (Drebenstedt, alternate)

Parks Committee — Tripp, Drebenstedt, Roloff

Transit — Reinhardt

Transportation Authority — Christensen

Fair Board — Reinhardt, Tripp

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# MORNING SUN

## Opinion: The tasks ahead for Granholm

By ERIC BAERREN

It's fresh starts all around right now - a new term for the governor, with new allies. A new party with new momentum, and new expectations on the part of voters.

Everyone is wondering about the future, and there are plenty of folks who assume that if it doesn't happen, the governor is to blame.

What the state is looking for, naturally, is the next Henry Ford. Or, rather, the next Henry Fords. These days, smaller and more agile is the way hot economies are being built. Flexible thinking, adapting to a constantly changing world; creative minds that can compete globally - these are the qualities upon which to rebuild the state.

Ford revolutionized industrialism, and rather than dwelling on how wealthy his innovations made Michigan for nearly a century, we should instead be looking at why he was a success story then, and what it tells us about today. Strategies that proved successful during the days of industrialization are no longer relevant.

It's sad to say, but Michigan will have to rely on a little luck to attract them. Places like Minneapolis, Seattle and parts of California have already figured out that there isn't a strong relationship between tax rate and economic growth. The state Legislature hung on to outdated ideas about economic growth during a crucial time when the smart boys in other places figured out that there was more to attracting bright business minds than just cutting taxes and squeezing state services.

Taxation - replacing the Single Business Tax - will be the first, most important job of the new Granholm administration. Republicans in control of the House declined the opportunity to leave their imprint, insisting right until the day they left office that any plan that didn't involve a net tax decrease would be D.O.A. It was, and now the same Republicans who stonewalled the governor during the Lame Duck session, the same Republicans who created the problem in the first place, will only be able to sit on the sidelines and vote against whatever plan the new Democratic majority crafts (the only obstacle is the Senate, where there is some reason for optimism).

But, the question that's been missed is how the governor plans to run her state offices. During the campaign, one of the more notorious smears launched against her was the suggestion that because young Ricky Holland died during her tenure, and because mistakes made by state officials led to it, that the governor herself was somehow responsible. It was a despicable insinuation, only clarified a couple of days later by the argument that the governor hadn't disciplined all of the right people in the right way.

You may argue with that level of accountability, and you may argue whether the same standards have been applied by those same people to the mistakes of other chief elected officials (say ... someone sitting in the Oval Office), but it's a reminder that the governor has more on her plate than just attracting employers.

Granholm, earlier this week, said the next four years will be liberating for her, without worrying about getting re-elected. The cynical mind might see that statement, and wonder if the first four years in office might not have been focused to heavily on winning the next four. But, with the state Legislature focused on governing as if John Engler would return to office after a four-year sabbatical, she's probably got reason to feel liberated. After all, she's got a Democratic House to help her leave her mark on the state.

If she were smart, she'd look at the state's economy for guidance. For about a hundred years, the state put all of its eggs in one basket - the auto industry and the innovative spirit of Henry

Ford. Now, today, a century later, the folly of that is fairly obvious.

There are plenty of problems in need of innovative, cooperative thinking. From declining environmental health to structural problems in how we pay for education to even whether we've approached the public health issue of drug abuse properly, Granholm's new term starts at a time rife with opportunities to leave her own fingerprint on Michigan.

Granholm says that she'd like to be remembered for a Milliken-esque ability to work across the aisle. She can do that, too, and got a mandate from voters to do it in the form of bouncing from power a Republican Party that's become so garrulous that it would rather leave office without leaving a mark than sign onto something ideologically distasteful.

Whether she attracts the new generation of Henry Fords to Michigan will go a long way to determining whether her administration is a success or failure in the eyes of the public. But, it's worth remembering that she doesn't run the economy, but state government. And, if she could just get something solved, that would be a step in the right direction for everyone.

*Eric Baerren is a Morning Sun columnist. He maintains a Web log at <http://www.baerrenblog.blogspot.com> and can be reached at [ebaerren@gmail.com](mailto:ebaerren@gmail.com).*

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